

BLAZE OF GLORY

THE LAST RIDE OF THE WESTERN HEROES



**BOOK
THREE**

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JOHN
OSTRANDER

LEONARDO
MANCO

MARVEL
COMICS

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OUR STORY THUS FAR...

In the mid 1880s, the town of **Wonderment, Montana** – a peaceful mixture of freed blacks, whites, and Indians living together – came under attack by hooded **Nightriders**, **Reno Jones** and a French-Canadian trapper, **Marcel Fournier**, left to recruit gunfighters to come help their cause. They returned with the **Rawhide Kid**, **Kid Colt**, **Two-Gun Kid**, and the **Outlaw Kid**. Meanwhile, The **Nez Perce** living nearby have summoned **Red Wolf** to aid the townspeople who have helped them. **Kid Colt** is pursued by the mysterious bounty hunter known only as **Gunhawk** and by the Pinkerton Agent, **Caleb Hammer**. Finding **Wonderment** cut off and besieged by the **Nightriders**, the heroes have tried a secret way in, only to discover it is not so secret...



by JOHN OSTRANDER & LEONARDO MANCO

Bullpen - Letters Mariana Manco - Colors
Mark Bernardo with Tom Brevoort - Editors
Bob Harras - Editor in Chief

A Stan Lee Presentation



POUR IT
ON! THE BOSS
SAYS T'KILL ANY
OWLHOOTS TRYIN'
TO GIT TO TH'
TOWN!

THEY AIN'T
GOIN' NOWHERES! WE
GOT 'EM TRAPPED ON
THAT LEDGE OPPOSITE!
NO COVER, NO WAY BACK,
AND WE GOT THE WAY
DOWN CUT OFF AS WELL!
WE GOT HIGH GROUND!
NO WAY THEY CAN
CUT LOOSE!

WISH YOU'D
TELL THEM THAT!
THEY'RE SENDIN'
BULLETS WHISTLIN' SO
CLOSE TO MICH EARS I
CAIN'T HARDLY GET A
DECENT SHOT
OFF!

KABLAM!

POW!

POW!

POW!

Two men, unseen by the Nightriders, observe the gun battle on either side of the gorge. Above the Rawhide Kid and his companions, the man known as **Red Wolf** silently glides into position...

...while below the Nightriders, the **Outlaw Kid** gets ready to make his play.

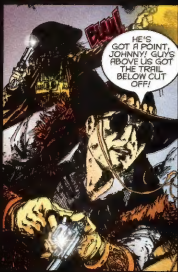


"YEAH, WELL, WITH ALL DUE RESPECTS, TWO-GUN, IT AIN'T LANCE TEMPLE WE NEED. IT'S THE **OUTLAW KID**!"

NO ANGLE FROM WHERE I'M AT. TO SEE MY TARGETS I'M GONNA HAVE TO MAKE MYSELF A TARGET!









The clatter of hooves rings out and then dies away. Silently, Red Wolf watches them go and then starts to descend into the gorge...



...the gorge into which Reno Jones fell after being shot.

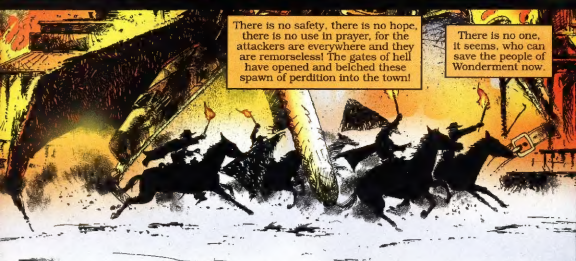


For weeks following their initial attack, the Nightriders had been content to attack outlying farms and homesteads. Hoping with fear and intimidation to drive away the people of Wonderment.

Tonight, they have returned to the town itself, their patience long since gone.



Fire and lead and howls in the night! Flames driving people from homes and bullets waiting for them in the streets, and the old rebel yell like a knife of fear to cut into the very soul!



There is no safety, there is no hope, there is no use in prayer, for the attackers are everywhere and they are remorseless! The gates of hell have opened and belched these spawn of perdition into the town!

There is no one, it seems, who can save the people of Wonderment now.

And then they come, the four men, like avenging angels from heaven, bursting upon the despoilers like thunderbolts, killing the killers!

POW BLAM PKOW BLAM

Their guns spit justice like fire from heaven and it's as if giants from another age have descended to earth! Giants they are, legends in their own time!

PKOW!

BLAM



And then they come, the four
men, like avenging angels from
heaven, bursting upon the
despoilers like thunderbolts,
killing the killers!

POW BLAM POW BLAM

Their guns spit justice like fire
from heaven and it's as if giants
from another age have descended
to earth! Giants they are, legends
in their own time!



BULLPEN BULLETINS

AVAILABLE JANUARY 19TH

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Will Captain America prevail against the awesome evil of the Hate Monger? Can Nick Fury and Falcon tip the scales for the forces of good? Sharon Gander captured in the Savage Land? By DAN JURGENS and ANDY KUBERT!

CAPTAIN MARVEL

Trading punches with the green polychrome bad enough, but when the man-bating Wendigo makes his appearance, Captain Marvel thinks about getting into a new line of work... that is, if he lives that long! By PETER DAVID and CHRIS CROSS!

INCREDIBLE HULK

Banner must undertake a journey into his own psyche in an attempt to reunite the various fractured shards of his personality! And in this case, that means facing different versions of the Hulk... including new incarnations you've never seen before! By PAUL JENKINS and RON GARNEY & MIKE MCKONE!

PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN

Spider-Man, under siege in a Styria-ruled Latvia, decides the only way to get real answers is to invade Castle Doom itself! Now it's an unhinged wall-crawler vs. the marshaled forces of Doom's stronghold! By HOWARD MACKIE and JOHN ROMITA JR.!

THOR

First Thor and Loki face off in a showdown that will determine the fate of the Odinson's alter ego, Jake Olson! Next Thors and Mangos follow the Map of A-Ending to the planet Regal, where they decimate the Colonizers and their Recorders! By DAN JURGENS and JERRY ORDWAY & LADRON!

THUNDERBOLTS

The Thunderbolts' mission, bring in the Beetle — even if that means taking on Justin Hammer and his horde of super-villain hirelings! But when the helmet comes off, will it be Mach-1 under the armor... or someone else? By FABIAN NICIZIA and MARK BAGLEY!

WOLVERINE

The world has changed once again! The forces of the High Lord have married Mr. Fantastic, the Invisible Woman, the Human Torch and the Thing! But the Fantastic Four are not gone! In the place of the original team, a new foursome has gathered: Spider-Man! The Hulk! Ghost Rider! And Wolverine! By ERIK LARSEN and ROGER CRUZ!

X-51

What happens when X-51's robotic systems, corrupted by Sentinel programs, compel him to respond to the X-Men with unbridled violence? How will Wolverine, Shadowcat, Psylocke, Angel, Jubilee and Nightcrawler deal with the massively advanced Machine Man? By KARL BOLLERS and JOE BENNETT!

X-MAN

Having just faced Apocalypse, has X-Man created yet another reality for himself? Waking up in some kind of underground prison, Nate Grey, wearing a power-inhibiting suit, is virtually helpless... but when he befriends his fellow prisoners, he realizes that his worst suspicions may be right! By TERRY KAVANAGH and MIKE MILLER!

Hi, Heroes!

Since our world-famous Soapbox column is based on the ancient, venerated ritual of awarding No-Prizes to those who are deemed worthy, what could be more appropriate than having our very first letter deal with the profound, though perplexing, issue of the time honored No-Prize itself? So, here it is, in all its pristine glory, delivered by the U.S. Mail at the behest of David Sollars of Thompson, OH...

"When, Why and to Whom was the first No-Prize ever given out?"

Ah David, David... would that my memory was all that good! I know not the date, so sought after by historians everywhere, when the first award was made. Nor can I recall the name of the lucky recipient. However, since No-Prizes were originally given to those who were sharp-eyed enough to find an error in a Marvel strip, I'm sure that our first No-Prize Laureate, whose identity is now alas, lost to history, must have found some sort of misspelling or punctuation error — even though it's probably next to impossible for you to imagine an error in any Marvel masterpiece!

Not only does Shahid Haque of Evansville, IN choose to toss a question at me, but he even ventures to tell me what kind of answer he doesn't want me to give.

"I've been wondering — which character in the entire Marvel Universe do you yourself most identify with? And please don't say J. Jonah Jameson!"

Okay, Mr. Haque, I won't say him if you don't want me to — but the fact is, the now unmentioned J. Jonah You-Know-Who actually is the one I would have mentioned. However, since I would never design to disobey or offend a No-Prize Laureate, I'll settle for another choice. Next to JJJ, I guess I most relate to Willie Lumpkin, 'cause neither of us

STAN'S SOAPBOX

has been seen around as much as we used to (For those of you who don't know who Willie Lumpkin is, I suggest you ask some of the older Marvel readers. I'd tell you myself, but that would make it too easy!)

Wow! Talk about great memory! Jade Venes of Melbourne, Australia has it all...

"In a past Soapbox, you said you couldn't reveal what Spider-Man's eyepieces are made of. Well, in Amazing Fantasy #15 you did describe his eyepieces as 'clever plastic lenses of the two-way mirror type.' You later said Mystero's helmet is based on the same principle. He can see out but no one can see in."

Hey, what's the problem, Jade. I originally said I couldn't reveal what Spidey's eyepieces were made of, right? Well, I couldn't — 'cause I didn't remember! So thanks for reminding me (How's that for the prize cop-out of the millennium!)

By now you should know our mailing address by heart, but for those of you whose memories are as bad as mine, here we go again: stanlanz@aol.com or Soapbox, Marvel, 317 Park Ave S, New York, NY 10016. So, till next ish, be sure to Think Marvel — 'cause if you don't, Professor X will know it and you'd better watch out!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

Stan Lee

MARVEL.COM

Search for Tomorrow

What is the Tomorrow Stone? What the heck was Sentinel Company talking about in GAMBIT #12, anyway? Find out in our Gambit CyberComic 'The Hunt for the Tomorrow Stone,' where the Cunt X-Man and the lovely Ms. Conway find themselves in a race against time... and each other! This untold tale is only available at Marvel.com! Don't wait for Tomorrow — see it now! WWW.MARVEL.COM/omnidaze

This week's chat schedule!

01/20 @ 9:30pm ET
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST CHAT with writer, Kurt Busiek and editor Tom Brevoort!

01/24 @ 8pm ET
SPIDER-MAN and THOR penciler — John Romita, Jr.
AOL Keyword: Marvel!
All Chat schedules subject to change/celebration.
Refer to Keyword: Marvel > Astral Plane > Chat Schedule for latest schedule.

BULLPEN BITS #36

BY CHRIS GIARRUSSO

TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE, X-SI. TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE. TELL ME X-SI, WHAT YOU SEE. X-SI, TELL ME WHAT THE THINGS ARE... THAT YOU ARE SEEING...

OKAY! OKAY! SHUT UP FOR A MINUTE, JATU!

YOU ALWAYS HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, SPIDER-MAN! WELL, WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER TO THAT??

DAILY BUGLE INTERN, SAM EXMORE, IS A JUNKIE!

WHAT ON EARTH—X WAS THAT, X-SI?

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU CAN'T SEE, JATU.



He is the
Two-Gun Kid.

As a lawyer, Matt Hawk came West to bring civilization to the frontier and discovered that first the frontier had to be tamed. Stepping outside the law, Hawk sought justice in the role of the Two-Gun Kid.

He had hoped that time was past. The world thought both Matt Hawk and the Two-Gun Kid were dead, and the man who was both let them think that way. Taking on a new identity as Clay Harder, he became a lawyer once more.

He discovered that justice remained elusive. Fate forced his hand to assume the role of the Two-Gun Kid again. This is not what he dreamed of, but, he is forced to admit, it is what he lives for.

Even as his opponents die, the Two-Gun Kid wonders again at what sort of man he has become.



He is
**Kid Colt,
Outlaw!**

They say the only thing faster than his guns is his temper, and nothing inflames his temper quicker or hotter than the sight of evil being done.

He knows first-hand the sting of injustice. His own father was brought down by evil men who claimed to have the law on their side. Colt's own reaction was quick, violent, and terminal, and placed him outside the law but still on the side of those seeking justice.

He throws himself into the middle of the battle, heedless of the danger, counting on others to watch his back. The men he faces are stone-killers, and in their faces he sees again those who killed his father.

He cannot kill them enough. Deep down, he really doesn't care if he survives, so long as he can take his enemy with him

A full-page comic book illustration of Johnny Bart, also known as the Rawhide Kid. He is depicted in a dynamic, action-oriented pose, wearing a dark, long coat, a wide-brimmed hat, and a bandana. He is holding two pistols, one in each hand, with a bright light emanating from the barrel of the pistol in his right hand. The background is a chaotic, red-tinted scene of a battle, with several figures in the background, some of whom are being thrown or falling. The overall style is reminiscent of classic Western comic book art.

He is Johnny Bart,
better known as the
Rawhide Kid.

Where his partner, Kid Colt, is hot-blooded and impulsive, he is cold and methodical. No wasted moves, no misplaced shots. Some say he has ice water in his veins, but others insist it is pure death.

At the end of the street he leaps from his horse and seeks solid ground, the better to place his shots. His is a cold fury, reserved for those who would batter the defenseless.

He has been on the receiving end and has vowed it would never be that way again, for himself or any he came across. If that put him outside the law from time to time, that was fine by him.

It will be that way so long as he can hold a gun.



His name is Lance Temple,
but the West knows him
best as the **Outlaw Kid**!

Lance had made a vow to his father never to take up guns. When circumstances forced him to do otherwise, he created a masked identity men came to call the **Outlaw Kid**.

Lance became increasingly split and guilt-ridden over his two identities. When his father discovered the truth, the shock killed him.

Lance, in his grief, disowned that side of himself, to the point where he blames the Outlaw Kid for his father's death and rides the West in search of his father's killer.

When the bandanna comes up, he is once again certain and sure. He is the Outlaw Kid and his mind is clear and he knows what must be done.

His enemies die. And the weak know justice.



HANG
IT ALL!
PULL
BACK!

BUT THIS
AIN'T OVER!
YOU HEAR ME?
NOT BY A LONG
SHOT!



SPEAKING
OF LONG
SHOTS...



BLAM



NOT BAD,
COURSE, IF
IT'D BEEN ME, I'D'VE
BLOWN OFF HIS
SKULL AND NOT
JUST HIS
SHOULDER.

FIGURE
YOU'LL
GET YOUR
CHANCE.



Slowly, they come out, these people of Wonderment. Come out and stare.

Masked white men had attacked their town. These four--also white, some masked--drove them away. In the glare of the fires in the burning shops, they all stare at one another until, finally, one of the four speaks.

HOWDY,

HEARD YOU FOLKS COULD USE SOME HELP.

RECKON WE'RE IT, IF THAT SUITS YA.

OSWALD ALLEN



Up in the mountain,
with the Nightriders...



WHAT YOU
DOIN', MAN? I
TOLD YOU!
I SHOT THAT
RENO JONES
MYSELF! I
SAW HIM GO
DOWN!



AND I
TOLD YOU
NO ONE KILLS
RENO JONES
BUT ME!



WHAT WE
GONNA DO, BOSS?
THEM FOLKS IN TOWN
GOT THEMSELVES
SOME HIRED GUNS.
I RECOGNIZED SOME, AND
THOSE BOYS CAN ALL
SHOOT!

WE AIN'T
GOT US AS MANY
MEN AS WE HAD, AND
I SURE AS HELL DIDN'T
HIRE ON TO GO UP
AGAINST THE LIKES
OF THE RYWHIDE
KID!



YOU HIRED
UP TO DO A JOB.
FIRST MAN TRIES
TO SNEAK OFF
I WILL KILL AS
DEAD AS SKUNK
HERE.

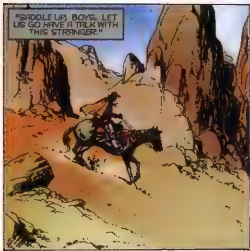
WE'LL SEND
A MESSAGE TO
RILEY OVER IN
ANACONDA. HE'S
THE ONE WHO HIRED
US IN THE FIRST
PLACE. HE'LL HIRE
SOME OTHERS.
MEANWHILE, WE
SIT TIGHT.

BOSS!

GOT A GUY RIDIN' UP THE
PASS TOWARDS WONDERMENT
ALL ON HIS LONESOME. WHAT
YOU WANT US T'DO?



"SADDLE UP, BOYS. LET
US GO HAVE A TALK WITH
THIS STRANGER."



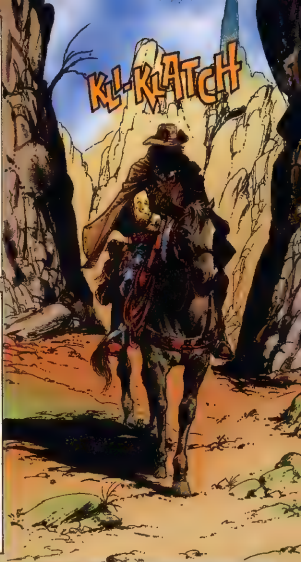
HEY
THERE, MISTER.
WHO'RE YOU AND
WHERE DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE
GOING?



MY
NAME IS CALLED
HAMMER AND I HAVE
BUSINESS IN A
TOWN CALLED
WONDERMENT AND I
AM NOT OF A MIND TO
EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.
SO MOVE ON
BY.



KL-KLATCH



KLK
CLAK
CLACK
KL-KLATCH





WHEN THE NIGHTRIDERS COME BACK, ME AND THE OTHERS WILL FIGHT 'EM ON HORSEBACK. NEED YOU FOLKS TO FIGHT 'EM FROM THE GROUND. GOING TO ALL HAVE TO PULL TOGETHER OR WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.

WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO FOR GUNS AND RIMFIRE?

TAKE 'EM FROM THOSE WE DROPPED LAST NIGHT. WE'LL GET YOU MORE THE SAME WAY.

WE'LL SCHOOL YOU. EACH OF US WILL TAKE SOME MORE AND WORK WITH YOU. BEST WE CAN DO.

HEY, MISTER!

GIMME A GUN. I WANT TO LEARN, TOO!

YOU DON'T WANT TO WALK THAT PATH, SON.

YEAH I DO!

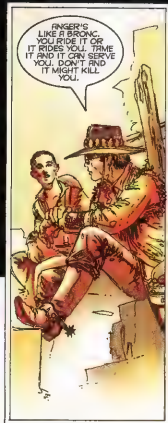
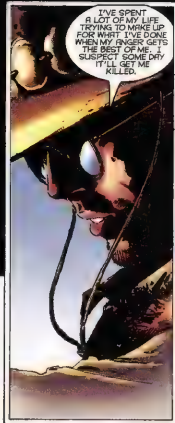
THEY KILLED MY DADDY, RENO JONES! THOUGHT YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND!



"I READ ALL ABOUT YOU! MEN
STOLE YOUR LAND AND THEN KILLED
YOUR DADDY. AND WHEN YOU WENT
TO CONFRONT 'EM, THEY DREW ON
YOU AND YOU HAD T'KILL 'EM! THAT'S
WHAT ALL THE STORIES SAY!"

"THE STORIES...THE STORIES GOT IT
WRONG, SON. YEAH, THE TWO MEN
CHEATED MY FATHER OUT OF HIS LAND,
AND I SUSPECTED THEM OF KILLING
HIM, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW FOR SURE.
AND I NEVER GAVE THEM A CHANCE.
I JUST GOT MAD AND SHOT THEM
DOWN. THEY WEREN'T EVEN ARMED."

"THAT'S WHY MY PA DIDN'T WANT ME
MESSING AROUND WITH GUNS--HE
KNEW MY ANGER AND WHAT I MIGHT
DO. TRUTH IS--AND I DON'T ADMIT
THIS MUCH TO ANYONE--MY ANGER
HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY WORST ENEMY."



As night falls,
up in the
mountain...

HEY, BOSS!
WE FOUND
ANOTHER MAN
TRYING TO COME
IN THE BACK
DOOR!

HOWDY,
BOYS. NOT
LOOKIN' FOR NO
TROUBLE, TRYIN'
T'FIND AN OL' FRIEND
WHO SAID HE WAS
HEADED UP THIS
WAY IS ALL.

I KNOW
YOU. YOU'RE
THE BOUNTY
HUNTER
THEY CALL
GUNFUNK.

MR. HAMMER
HERE IS A PINKERTON
AGENT. WE DON'T HAVE
MUCH USE FOR EITHER
ONE OF YOU BIRDS.
APPEARS YOU'RE BOTH
HUNTIN' TH' SAME
MAN.

COLT?

COLT.

LOOK,
MISTER--WHATEVER
YOUR BUSINESS IS
DOESN'T CONCERN
US. IF HE'S THROWN
IN WITH THOSE PEOPLE
DOWN THERE, IT CAN
ONLY BE TO YOUR
ADVANTAGE IF WE
BRING HIM OUT.

MEBBE--
BUT WE DON'T
NEED BOTH OF
YOU T'DO IT.

SO HERE'S
WHAT WE DO.
YOU BOTH GET
YOUR GUNS BACK.
YOU FACE DOWN
EACH OTHER. WINNER
GETS TO GO GET
COLT. LOSER JUST
GETS DEAD.

TURN ON
US OR REFUSE
AND YOU BOTH
GET DEAD. HOW'S
THAT SOUND?





KABOOM!



A man falls, but it is neither the bounty hunter nor the Pinkerton agent. The shot came from the crest above, and everyone gasps when they look upwards. Some even cry out in fear, for it is their nightmares pursuing them in the flesh!

The figure, glowing white in the spectral moonlight, is a legend. Some think he is a myth. The natives call him "He-Who-Rides-The-Midnight-Winds" but white men know him simply as...

...The
Ghost
Rider!



FOOLISH
MORTALS! YOU
HAVE AWAKENED MY
WRATH! NOW KNOW
THE FULL FURY
OF THE GHOST
RIDER!



LOOKS
LIKE WE GOT
US ANOTHER
OPTION,
PINKERTON!



GRAB
OUR HORSES,
BOUNTY
HUNTER! LET'S
RIDE!



"OUR NEW FRIEND
SEEMS TO BE
SCATTERING OUR
ENEMIES!"



THE
TOWN?

THE
TOWN.



HEAR ME,
MORTALS! THE
TOWN OF WONDERMENT
NOW LIES UNDER MY
PROTECTION! PERSIST
IN YOUR ATTACKS AND
THE GATES OF HELL
WILL GAPE FOR
YOU!



WHAT
NOW,
BOSS?!

RILEY'S
GOT A SPECIAL
HATE FOR THAT
GLOWING BUZZARD.
SEND ANOTHER RIDER
T'HIM. TELL HIM
ABOUT TH' GHOST
RIDER.



I
GUARANTEE
YOU—HE'LL SEND
US WHATEVER WE
NEED T'FINISH THIS
JOB ONCE AND
FOR ALL!

TO BE
CONCLUDED!